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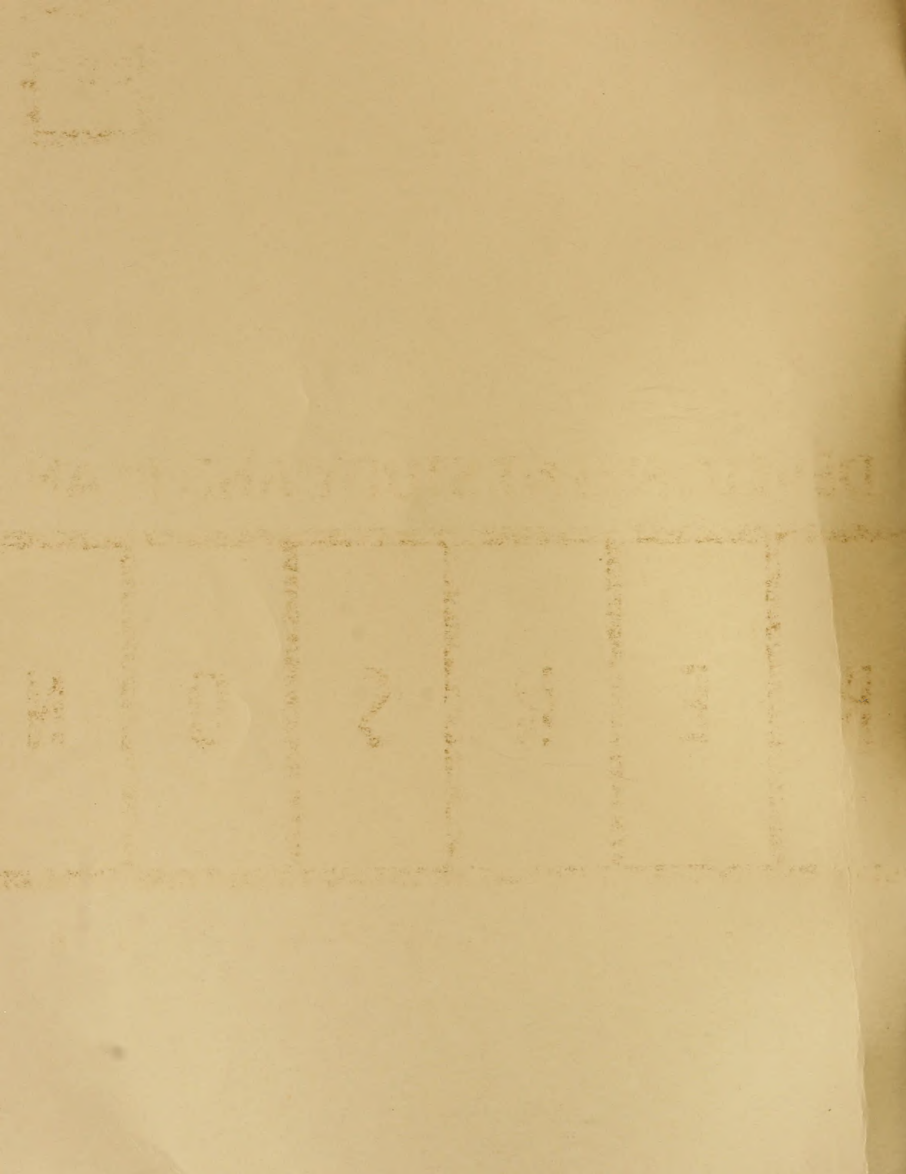
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DEVELOPMENT STUDY AND PLAN

B E N S O N

N O R T H C A R O L I N A



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DEVELOPMENT STUDY AND PLAN
TOWN OF BENSON, NORTH CAROLINA

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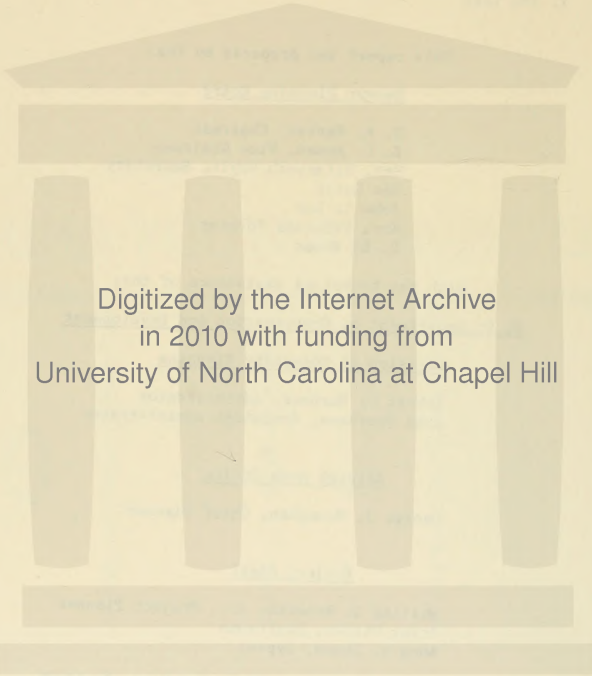
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

During 1961, the Benson Board of Commissioners became interested in establishing a Community Planning Program for the Town. A Planning Board was established and members were appointed. The Town Board applied to the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency for a planning grant to assist the Town in financing several planning studies. The grant was approved and the Division of Community Planning of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development was retained to assist the Planning Board in the preparation of (1) base maps, (2) a population and economic study, (3) a land use survey, (4) a land use plan, (5) a zoning ordinance, and (6) subdivision regulations.

This report consists of the findings of the first four studies listed above. It is hoped that the land use plan and other information presented herein will serve as a guide for both public and private development decisions. The zoning ordinance, the subdivision regulations, and other studies to implement the development plan will be undertaken by the Planning Board at a later date.

chapter 1

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

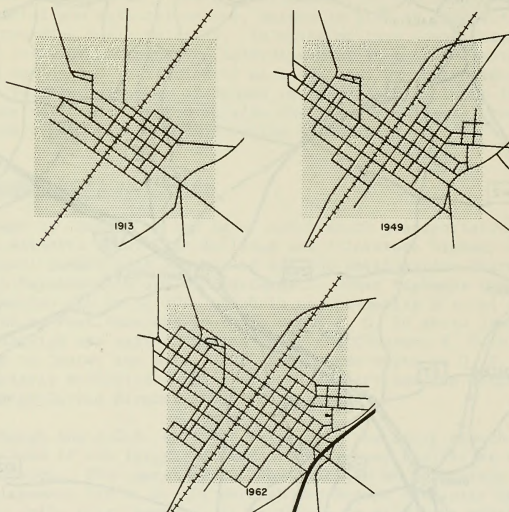
REGIONAL SETTING

PHYSICAL SETTING

Before studying the internal composition of the community it is useful to look at it in its full perspective - examining its history, its climate, its site characteristics, its regional function and relationships, etc.

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

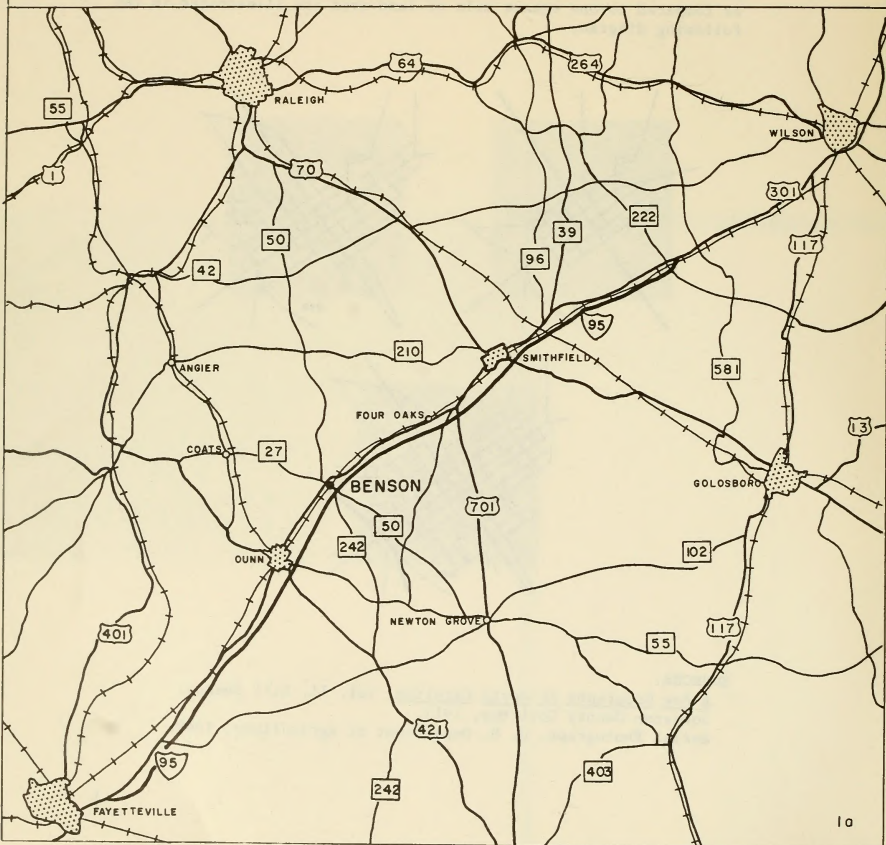
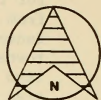
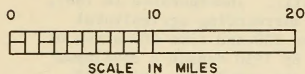
The site for the Town of Benson was selected by Alfred M. Benson, a Johnston County farmer, who began selling portions of his farm for Town development soon after the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad from Smithfield to Fayetteville was built. Incorporated in 1887, Benson grew slowly as did many of the surrounding agricultural towns. In 1910 Benson's population was 800, and some 200 acres of land were used for town development. By 1950 Benson's developed area consisted of about 350 acres and its population was 2,012. The 1960 population was 2,355; the built-up area today contains about 425 acres. Benson's relative sizes in 1913, 1949, and today as compared to one square mile of land area are illustrated in the following diagram.



SOURCES:

A New Geography of North Carolina, Vol. II, Bill Sharpe.
Johnston County Soil Map, 1913.
Aerial Photograph, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1949.

MAP I
REGIONAL MAP
BENSON AND VICINTY



REGIONAL SETTING

SURROUNDING TOWNS AND CITIES

Although Benson is an independent community surrounded by agricultural lands, it is situated less than 15 miles from four other towns; Four Oaks (1960 population - 1,010); Erwin (1960 population - 3,183); Dunn (1960 population - 7,566); and Coats (1960 population - 1,049). Smithfield, the Johnston County seat, which had a 1960 population of 6,117, is only 15 miles away. Two major North Carolina cities, Raleigh and Fayetteville, are both less than 35 miles away.

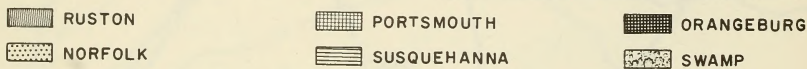
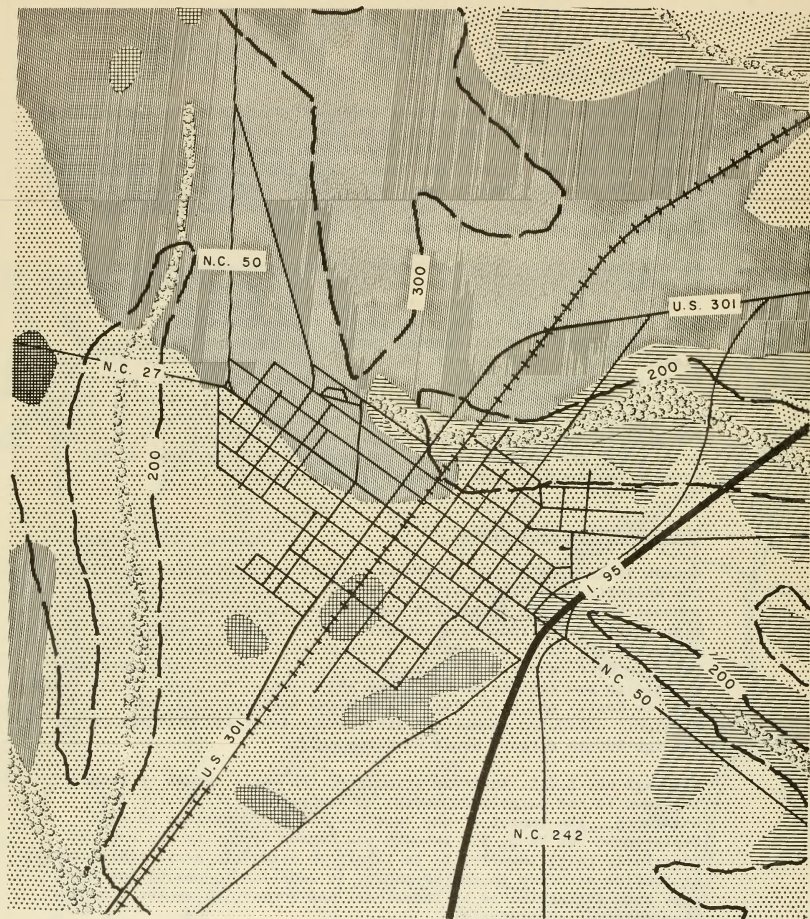
As an urban center, Benson performs several functions; however, it is primarily a trade and services center for the surrounding region. As such, it must compete with the neighboring cities and towns for both the farm and non-farm trade of the region's residents. In its other functions as a residential center, an employment center, and a social and cultural center, Benson is also in competition with the surrounding municipalities. In spite of this competition, Benson and these other towns are interdependent in that the cultural, trade, and employment facilities of each are used by the residents of others. For example, a number of Benson residents are employed in establishments which are located outside the Town; similarly, some of the workers employed in Benson reside in other Towns.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Benson is located on two major north-south transportation facilities, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and Interstate Highway 95, which connect Benson with Smithfield and the northeastern United States and with Fayetteville and the southeast. Other highways which serve the community are U. S. 301; which is now primarily a local road leading north to Four Oaks and south to Dunn; N. C. 50 which leads northwest to Raleigh and east to Newton Grove and Clinton; N. C. 27, which leads west to Coats; and N. C. 242, which leads south to U. S. 421. Regularly-scheduled commercial airline services are available at the Raleigh-Durham Airport about 40 miles away.

Although the A.C.L. Railroad stimulated the early growth of Benson, the Town is now largely dependent on highway facilities for its existence. The impact of the construction of Interstate 95 as a replacement for U. S. 301 through the Benson community has not yet been fully felt; however, it is likely to stimulate additional interest in tourism services in the community in addition to making the community more attractive as an industrial and commercial center from the standpoint of accessibility.

GENERALIZED MAP OF CONTOURS AND SOIL TYPES



CONTOUR INTERVAL — 100 FT.

APPROX. SCALE 1 IN = 1667 FT.

SOURCE: SOIL SURVEY OF JOHNSTON COUNTY, 1913
U.S. AND N.C. DEPTS. OF AGRICULTURE



PHYSICAL SETTING

PHYSIOGRAPHY

Situated on the western edge of the North Carolina Coastal Plain, Benson has an average elevation of 250 feet above sea level. The Town site slopes gently to the south; drainage is to the west, south, and east to Mingo Creek and Driving Branch where elevations of less than 200 feet are found. An elevation of 300 feet is reached just to the north of Benson between Old Raleigh Road and the Atlantic Coastline Railroad.

Predominant soil types in the area are Ruston, north of Benson, and Norfolk, south of Benson, both of which are generally well-drained and suitable for most agricultural and urban uses. Slopes are usually gentle, ranging from 2 to 6 percent; a few slopes in the vicinity of Driving Branch are steeper, some reaching a gradient of 12 to 15 percent. Substantial portions of the land area between Harnett Street and Mingo Creek on the southwest side of Benson consist of soils which have low slope gradients and a high water table creating spots which are extremely difficult to drain. The wet areas are located in and around the spots indicated as Portsmouth soil and the accompanying map.

HYDROLOGY

Ground water in sufficient quantities for private and public water supplies is generally available in the Tuscaloosa rock formation which underlies the Black Creek formation of the area and which can be tapped by deep wells. Because of the poor quality of some of the available ground waters, particularly high iron content, treatment is often needed prior to domestic and industrial use.

CLIMATE

Prevailing winds in the Benson area, as in the surrounding region, are from the southwest; however, there are frequent shifts in wind direction. Annual precipitation averages about 48 inches with precipitation lowest in January and highest in July. The mean annual temperature is about 61 degrees Fahrenheit with the highest average monthly temperature in July and the lowest in December or January.

chapter 2

THE ECONOMY THE POPULATION

As there can be little physical growth in a community without a growing population and economy to support such expansion, it is necessary to examine the community population and economy to see what growth potentials exist before plans for physical development are made.

THE ECONOMY

Historically, the economy of Benson has been that of an agricultural trade center where farmers exchanged farm products or money for goods and services. Throughout the years, Benson has competed with the surrounding towns and cities for the farmers' trade; only in recent years has there been some diversification in the local economy with the establishment of some manufacturing activities. However, the Benson economy is still largely oriented toward agricultural trade.

Since detailed economic data for the Town of Benson are not available, this section generally examines the composition and vitality of the Benson economy in terms of economic statistics which are available for Johnston County and Banner Township.

LABOR FORCE

The 1960 Johnston County civilian labor force was 22,122 workers. At the same time there were 1,865 workers in the Banner Township labor force. In 1960 about 5.1 percent of the Johnston County workers were unemployed as compared to 2.4 percent of the Banner Township workers.

A slightly higher percentage of the 1960 Civilian Labor Force of Banner Township was made up of private wage and salary workers than in Johnston County as a whole. Similarly, Johnston County had a higher percentage of self-employed workers than did Banner Township.

These differences are characteristic of the contrast between a rural area (Johnston County) and a more urban area (Banner Township and the Town of Benson.) Inconsistent with the usual relationship is the fact that a larger proportion of the County Labor Force than that of the Township was employed in government work. More detailed information on the 1960 labor force composition of Johnston County and Banner Township is presented in Table 1.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment in Banner Township is distributed among four principal economic divisions - agriculture, nondurable manufacturing, retail trade, and services. In 1960 about 26 percent of the civilian labor force was employed in agriculture, 11.9 percent in non-durable manufacturing, 18.2 percent in retail trade, and 18.4 percent in all services.

There were slightly higher percentages of workers employed in construction and mining, wholesale trade, retail trade, business and repair services in Banner Township than in Johnston County in 1960. These kinds of trades and services activities are normally more predominant in urban areas than in rural areas.

Table I
LABOR FORCE COMPOSITION
Banner Township and Johnston County: 1960

	BANNER TOWNSHIP		JOHNSTON COUNTY	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Persons 14 years of age and over	3,465	100.0	43,075	100.0
Civilian Labor Force	1,865	53.8	22,122	51.4
<u>Employed</u>	1,821	100.0	20,989	100.0
Private Wage & Salary Workers	1,080	59.3	11,740	55.9
Government Workers	109	6.0	2,039	9.7
Self-employed Workers	502	27.6	6,171	29.4
Unpaid Family Workers	130	7.1	1,039	4.9
<u>Not in Civilian Labor Force</u>	1,597	100.0	20,932	100.0
Inmate of an Institution	0	- - -	182	.9
Enrolled in School	393	24.6	5,260	25.1
Other, less than 65 yrs. of age	943	59.0	11,968	57.2
Other, over 65 yrs. of age	261	16.3	3,522	16.8
<u>Unemployed</u>	44	- - -	1,133	- - -
As a percent of the Civilian Labor Force	- - -	2.4	- - -	5.1
As a percent of those 14 yrs. of age and over	- - -	1.3	- - -	2.6

Table 2
EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATIONAL TYPE
Banner Township and Johnston County: 1960

	Johnston County		Banner Township	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Agricultural, Forestry & Fishing	6,846	32.6	473	26.0
Manufacturing	3,749	17.9	289	15.8
Wood Products	560	2.7	54	3.0
Other Durables	425	2.0	17	.9
Apparel and Textiles	1,845	8.8	170	9.3
Other Nondurables	919	4.4	48	2.6
Trades and Services				
Construction & Mining	1,705	8.1	149	8.2
Transportation	586	2.8	49	2.7
Wholesale Trade	587	2.8	101	5.5
Retail Trade	2,931	14.0	331	18.2
Business and Repair Services	334	1.6	36	2.0
Personal Services	1,529	7.3	182	10.0
Professional Services	1,570	7.5	122	6.7
Public Administration	486	2.3	8	.4
Other	666	3.2	81	4.4
TOTAL	20,989		1,821	

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960

As shown in Table 3, (EMPLOYMENT CHANGES), 1950-1960, the number of males in the labor force in Johnston County has decreased during the last decade as has the number of males employed. There has been a much larger decrease of males both in the labor force and in employment in Johnston County than in North Carolina as a whole.

At the same time, there has been a small increase in the size of the female labor force and a 40 percent increase in female employment in Johnston County. Although the increased opportunity for female employment has helped to offset the loss in male labor force employment, it has not been sufficient to keep the county economy thriving.

Table 3
EMPLOYMENT CHANGE, 1950 - 1960
(As a percent of 1950 Employment Figures)

	North Carolina	Johnston County
<hr/>		
<u>Males:</u>		
In labor force	3.6 % (Increase)	-14.1 % (Decrease)
Employed	-.3 % (Decrease)	-16.2 % (Decrease)
<u>Females:</u>		
In labor force	36.1 % (Increase)	4.8 % (Increase)
Employed	34.1 % (Increase)	39.9 % (Increase)
<hr/>		

Source: Compiled from U. S. Census of Population data for 1950 and 1960.

There are approximately 625 manufacturing jobs in Benson. However, only 289 people living in Banner Township in 1960 earned their living in manufacturing. This indicates that the bulk of the Benson Labor Force comes from outside Banner Township. Apparel and textile industries, employing female workers, accounted for 170 of the manufacturing positions held by Banner Township residents.

While there is a large portion of the labor force engaged in manufacturing (textile and apparel work, specifically), it should be noted that this kind of activity usually employs a predominately female work force. Although such economic activity does bring substantial payrolls to the community, it provides little opportunity for the employment of the male labor force. A surplus of male workers and a scarcity of male employment opportunities bring about unemployment and out-migration. Both factors hamper the growth of the local economy and the local population.

INCOME

Johnston County

The median family income* of Johnston County residents in 1959 was \$2,469, as compared to the State median family income of \$3,956. In 1949 the Johnston County median family income was \$1,496 as compared to the State median of \$2,121. During the 1949-1959 decade, Johnston County dropped from a rank of 62nd among North Carolina counties to one of 78th on the basis of median family income. For the same period, Johnston County had an extremely slow rate of family income increase, ranking 84th among the other counties of the State.

Banner Township

The median family income in Banner Township in 1959 was \$2,220, a figure 10 percent below the Johnston County median family income and 44 percent below the North Carolina median family income.

Almost one-third of the Banner Township families earned less than \$1,000 in 1959 and almost one-half earned less than \$2,000. Only 16 percent of the Township families earned more than \$5,000; about 5 percent has incomes of \$10,000 or more. The distribution of Banner Township family incomes is illustrated in the following table.

Table 4
FAMILY INCOMES
Banner Township, 1959

	No. of Families	% of Families
Less than \$1,000	365	28.9
\$1,000-\$1,999	223	17.6
\$2,000-\$2,999	207	16.3
\$3,000-\$3,999	174	13.7
\$4,000-\$4,999	100	7.9
\$5,000-\$5,999	65	5.1
\$6,000-\$6,999	32	2.5
\$7,000-\$7,999	16	1.3
\$8,000-\$8,999	20	1.6
\$9,000-\$9,999	4	.3
\$10,000-\$14,999	30	2.4
\$15,000-\$24,999	27	2.1
\$25,000 and over	4	.3
TOTAL	1,267	100.0

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960

*The median family income means that half of all families have less than this amount of income, while the other half have more.

Compared to the six Harnett and Johnston County Townships by which it is bordered, Banner Township ranked 5th on the basis of median family income in 1959. These townships with their respective median family incomes (1959) and principal towns are as follows:

<u>Township</u>	<u>Principal Town</u>	<u>Median Family Income (Township, 1959)</u>
Averasboro	Dunn	\$2,883
Grove	Coats	\$2,532
Pleasant Grove	_____	\$2,489
Plainview	_____	\$2,269
Banner	Benson	\$2,220
Elevation	_____	\$1,857
Meadow	_____	\$1,650

SOURCE: U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

HOUSING VALUES

About 50 percent of the housing units in the Town of Benson were owner-occupied in 1960. The average value of these houses was \$10,000, whereas the median value of owner-occupied housing units throughout Johnston County was \$6,400.

AGRICULTURAL TRADE

As stated earlier, Benson is predominately an agricultural trade center. As such, it must compete with the cities and towns of the surrounding region for the farmer's dollar.

An indication of the magnitude of the farm dollar in Johnston County is given by the following figures on the value of Johnston County cash crops. In 1960, Johnston County ranked 2nd among North Carolina counties on the basis of the total value of all cash crops with a total value of 37.5 million dollars.

Leading Johnston County crops with their respective values and ranks among the State's one hundred counties for 1960 were as follows:

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Value (millions of dollars)</u>	<u>Johnston County Rank (among N. C. Counties)</u>
Tobacco	28.3	2
Corn	3.6	4
Sweet Potatoes	2.1	1
Cotton	1.8	6
Soybeans for beans	1.0	6
Wheat	.5	5

All Crops*	37.5	2
------------	------	---

*Includes crops in addition to those listed.

SOURCE: North Carolina Agricultural Statistics, 1960.

SUMMARY

From the economic aspects examined here, it appears that the Benson-Banner Township economy has more vitality and diversity than that of Johnston County as a whole. In spite of some diversification in Benson where there are several manufacturing operations, the Banner Township economy is still geared largely to agricultural activities. For general economic conditions in the community to improve, new employment opportunities for males must be provided. Until this is done, workers and their families will continue to leave Benson and the surrounding farms seeking employment in more urban areas.

The population changes which are geared to the community economic situation are discussed in the following section.

THE POPULATION

Although the physical and economic characteristics of a community are important, the most essential component to its existence is its population. This section deals with the population characteristics of Benson and other relative areas and describes the population changes which seem likely in view of existing economic conditions in Benson, Banner Township, Johnston County, and rural North Carolina in general.

EXISTING POPULATION

In 1960 the Town of Benson had a population of 2,355 people. At the same time, Banner Township had 4,995 people. The existing population of the Benson Analysis Area*, based upon a count of housing units in Benson and its fringe area, is about 2,700 people.

*The Benson Analysis Area consists of the Town of Benson and fringe areas which are either the location of existing non-farm development or are likely to be developed with urban uses in the future. The Area boundaries are shown on Map 3.

AGE AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS

About 54 percent of the existing population of the Town of Benson are females with males being outnumbered in every age category except under 5 years of age. Benson's sex ratio of 87 males per 100 females is considerably lower than the North Carolina ratio of 97 males per 100 females. This low ratio seems to indicate both male outmigration and an aging population.

The following table contains age and sex information on the various segments of the Benson population. The largest single age group includes those individuals between the ages of 5 and 14. About 25 percent of the Benson population is under 15 and about 18 percent is over 54.

Table 5
AGE AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS
Town of Benson, 1960

Age	Males	Females	Total
Under 5	117	113	230
5 to 14	204	253	457
15 to 24	170	182	352
25 to 34	141	146	287
35 to 44	157	176	333
45 to 54	138	165	303
55 to 64	84	111	195
65 and over	82	116	198
ALL	1,093	1,262	2,355

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Only 319 persons or 13.5 percent of the 1960 population of Benson were nonwhite. At the same time, there were 767 nonwhites in Banner Township comprising 15.4 percent of the population. These figures are surprisingly low when compared to the Johnston County nonwhite percentage which was 22.4.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The educational attainment of adults over 25 years of age is lower in Banner Township than in either Johnston County, rural North Carolina, or urban North Carolina. Only 40 percent of the adults in the Township have completed the 6th grade; only 18 percent have completed high school. The following table compares educational attainment in urban North Carolina, rural North Carolina, Johnston County and Banner Township.

Table 6
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: ADULTS OVER 25 YEARS OF AGE

	North Carolina		Johnston County	Banner Township
	Urban	Rural		
Percent Completing 6th Grade	76	66	41	40
Percent Completing High School	41	26	22	18
Median School Years Completed	10.4	8.3	7.7	7.3

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

POPULATION TRENDS

The rural population of North Carolina has been decreasing since 1930 as there has been a continuous out-migration from farms to more urban areas. This movement has been the result of both a push from the mechanization of farming and a pull by improved economic opportunities in urban communities.

The Johnston County and Banner Township population changes shown in Table 7, illustrate the loss of population evidenced in rural areas. Population figures for the Town of Benson illustrate the effect of both the rural area decrease and the urban area increase as the Town's population has increased during every decade since 1900 but at a constantly decreasing rate of increase.

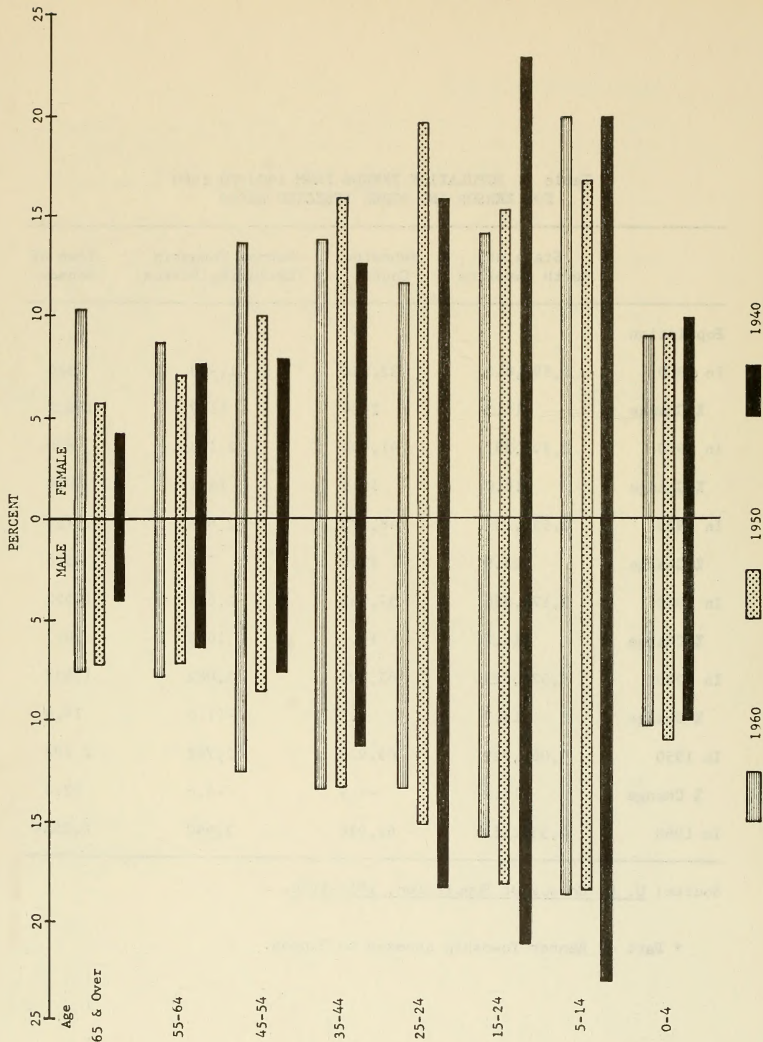
Table 7 POPULATION TRENDS FROM 1900 TO 1960
FOR BENSON AND OTHER SELECTED AREAS

	State of North Carolina	Johnston County	Banner Township (Excluding Benson)	Town of Benson
Population				
In 1900	1,893,810	32,250	1,928	384
% Change	16.5	28.4	11.7	108.3
In 1910	2,206,287	41,404	2,153	800
% Change	16.0	15.9	14.1	40.4
In 1920	2,559,123	48,998	2,456	1,123
% Change	23.9	17.6	7.9	35.5
In 1930	3,170,276	57,621	2,651	1,522
% Change	12.7	10.7	16.3	20.7
In 1940	3,571,623	63,798	3,082	1,837
% Change	13.7	3.3	-11.6	14.4
In 1950	4,061,929	65,906	2,762	2,102
% Change	12.2	-4.5	-4.6	12.0
In 1960	4,556,155	62,936	2,640	2,355*

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1910-1960.

* Part of Banner Township annexed to Benson.

CHART I, BENSON: TOTAL POPULATION BY AGE & SEX - 1940, 1950, 1960



AGE AND SEX TRENDS

The changes in the age and sex composition of the Benson population which have taken place since 1940 are demonstrated in Chart 1. The effect of out-migration is evidenced by the loss of the percent of the population in the age groups of 15-24 and 25-34 shown for both the past decades. The aging of the Benson population is shown by the increase in the percent of the population over 45.

RACIAL TRENDS

Since 1940 there has been a loss in the nonwhite population of Benson. In 1940 there were 399 nonwhites as compared to 340 in 1950 and 319 in 1960.

FUTURE POPULATION

An estimate of the population changes likely to take place in the Benson Analysis Area if past trends continue has been made using population trends and projections for Johnston County, Banner Township, and the Town of Benson.

The past and projected population figures for each of these areas are as follows.

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>
Johnston County	65,906	62,936	58,387	53,094
Banner Township	4,864	4,995	4,830	4,662
Town of Benson	2,102	2,355	2,502	2,544
BENSON ANALYSIS AREA	- - -	2,700	2,892 (2,900)	2,987 (3,000)

As shown, Johnston County and Banner Township are likely to continue to lose population unless economic conditions change out-migration movements. The population of the Town of Benson is expected to increase slowly at a decreasing increase rate. In other words, the rate of Benson's population increase which was 12.0 percent for the period from 1950 to 1960 will likely fall to 7.1 percent for 1960-1970, and to 3.3 percent for 1970-1980 giving population totals of 2,892 (2,900) for 1970 and 2,987 (3,000) for 1980.

The projected population figures are based on the assumption that conditions which have influenced past population trends will continue to do so in the future. A pronounced change in these conditions such as the creation of new employment opportunities will require a revision of the future population estimates.

The future land use space requirements which these population estimates suggest are discussed in Chapter 6.

EXISTING LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USE

Before a land use plan for a community can be prepared, it is necessary to know the existing land use situation - the land use types, amounts, patterns, and problems which exist.

EXISTING LAND USE

LAND USE SURVEY

In June, 1962, a survey of the existing use of land in and around Benson was conducted during which non-agricultural uses of land such as houses, stores, schools, etc. were recorded on a base map of the Benson community which had been prepared from old Town maps and aerial photographs. The extent of the area surveyed is shown on Map 3, Existing Land Use.

Included within the survey area was not only the land within the Town Limits but also fringe lands which either are the location of existing non-farm development or are likely to be developed with urban uses in the future.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

As it was generally impractical to identify and analyze each individual land use, such as barber shop, auto repair, ice plant, grocery store, etc. at the scale used for the land use maps, uses having similar functions were grouped into generalized categories for mapping and analysis. For example, establishments repairing automobiles, farm equipment, appliances, etc. are all grouped under the heading of Service, Business, Repair on both the land use maps and the land use analysis tables. The land use categories and subcategories used and examples of the land uses found in each category are set forth in the following table.

Table 8
LAND USE CATEGORIES

BUSINESS - Establishments involved in the distribution of goods to the public.

RETAIL

- Primary - department store, clothing store, gift shop, jewelry store.
- Secondary - appliance store, furniture store, auto sales, auto supply store, hardware store, fertilizer sales, building material sales.
- Convenience - service station, grocery store, food store, meat market, drug store.

WHOLESALE

- Merchants - fertilizer sales, building material sales.
- Petroleum - bulk petroleum storage.
- Farm Products - livestock market, fruit and vegetables sales, livestock pens and stables.

PRODUCTION - Establishments involved in the manufacturing of goods for public consumption.

MANUFACTURING

- Durable - lumber mill, woodworking shop, metal working shop.
- Nondurable - textile mill, printing shop.

MANUFACTURING SERVICES

- Utilities - water supply facilities, garbage dump.
- Construction - building, electrical, plumbing, and heavy construction contractors offices, shops, and yards.
- Miscellaneous - laundry and dry cleaning plants, cold storage plants, ice plants, independent storage buildings and yards, junk yards.

RESIDENTIAL

RESIDENCES

- Single-family, two-family, multi-family, tourist homes, mobile homes or house trailers.

VACANT

All structures and land which were not in nonagricultural use at the time the land use survey was conducted are considered as being vacant.

Table 8
LAND USE CATEGORIES

SERVICE - Establishments providing for intangible public needs.

CONSUMER

- Personal - restaurant, barber shop, beauty shop, laundromat, shoe repair, jewelry repair, hotel, funeral home.
- Amusement - theatre, pool hall, miniature golf, ball park.
- Communication - newspaper office, post office, telephone and telegraph offices.

PROFESSIONAL

- Administrative - municipal offices, fire station, police station, other government offices.
- Financial and Advisory - law office, accounting office, bank, engineering office, Chamber of Commerce.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL - Establishments providing for the mental, spiritual, and physical development of the public.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Education - school, library.
- Religion - church.
- Recreation - playground, park, swimming pool.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

- Medical - dental office, medical office.
- Institutional - cemetery, homes for the aged and infirm.

TRANSPORTATION - Facilities used in the transportation of passengers, goods, and power.

VEHICULAR

- Routes - rights-of-way for streets, alleys and railroads,
- Terminals - bus station, railroad depot, independent auto parking lots.

NONVEHICULAR

- Substations
- Power line easements

LAND USE MAPS

Using the land use classification system shown in Table 8, Land Use Categories, and data collected during the land use survey, the two following maps of the Benson community were prepared showing the existing land use pattern. The first of these, Map 3, shows the land use arrangement throughout the Benson Community with the exception of the Central Business District. Because of the complexity of the land development pattern in the Central Business District, land uses in that area are shown at a larger scale on Map 4, along with information on building areas and locations and specific land use designations.

LAND USE ANALYSIS

The tables accompanying the following land use maps indicate the acreage used for each land use type in the Benson Community and the percent of developed land taken up by each land use type.

For analytical purposes the community was divided into four statistical areas: (1) Benson Analysis Area; (2) Benson Fringe; (3) Town of Benson; and (4) Benson Central Business District. The boundaries of each area are shown on Map 3.

Summary data on the first three statistical areas listed are presented in Table 9, which appears opposite Map 3, summary data on the Central Business District appear in Table 10, opposite Map 4.

More detailed information on land usage for each statistical area is presented in the LAND USE - DETAILED DATA portion of this chapter.

Table 9
EXISTING LAND USE
June, 1962

BENSON, N. C.

Land Use Type	TOWN		FRINGE		TOTAL ANALYSIS AREA	
	Acres	Percent*	Acres	Percent*	Acres	Percent*
BUSINESS	20.2	4.8	12.8	6.0	33.0	5.2
Retail	12.4	2.9	2.2	1.0	14.6	2.3
Wholesale	7.8	1.8	10.6	5.0	18.4	2.9
PRODUCTION	18.3	4.3	22.6	10.7	40.9	6.4
Manufacturing	11.9	2.8	14.3	6.8	26.2	4.1
Manuf. Services	6.4	1.5	8.3	3.9	14.7	2.3
SERVICE	14.7	3.5	8.1	3.8	22.8	3.6
Consumer	11.8	2.8	6.8	3.2	18.6	2.9
Professional	1.0	.2	.6	.3	1.6	.3
Business	1.9	.5	.7	.3	2.6	.4
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL	31.9	7.5	4.4	2.1	36.3	5.7
Personal Development	18.4	4.3	4.4	2.1	22.8	3.6
Health and Welfare	13.5	3.2	.0	.0	13.5	2.1
TRANSPORTATION	159.3	37.4	129.6	61.0	288.9	45.3
Vehicular	159.1	37.3	124.3	58.5	283.4	44.4
Nonvehicular	.2	.1	5.3	2.5	5.5	.9
RESIDENTIAL	180.7	42.5	34.9	16.4	215.6	33.8
Single-family	171.7	40.4	34.8	16.3	206.5	32.4
Other	9.0	2.1	.1	.1	9.1	1.4
TOTAL LAND IN USE (excluding agric.)	425.1		212.4		637.5	
PERCENT OF LAND IN USE		66.5		22.4		40.1
TOTAL LAND	639.7		949.5		1,589.2	
VACANT LAND (including agric.)	214.6		737.1		951.7	
PERCENT OF LAND VACANT		33.5		77.6		59.9

*Each land use type is shown as a percent of the total land in use in each given area, i.e. Town, Fringe, and Total Analysis Area.

BENSON NORTH CAROLINA

MAP 3

EXISTING LAND USE
JUNE, 1962

PREPARED FOR
THE BENSON PLANNING BOARD IN 1962
BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

The preparation of this map was financed in part
through an urban planning grant from the Housing
and Home Planning Agency, under the provisions
of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954,
as amended



0 100 200
SCALE IN FEET

BOUNDARY OF ANALYSIS AREA —

SERVICE
CONSUMER
[Symbol] COMMUNICATION
[Symbol] PERSONAL
[Symbol] AMUSEMENT
PROFESSIONAL
[Symbol] ADMINISTRATIVE
BUSINESS
[Symbol] REPAIR

SOCIAL & CULTURAL
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
[Symbol] EDUCATIONAL
[Symbol] RECREATIONAL
[Symbol] RELIGIOUS
HEALTH & WELFARE
[Symbol] INSTITUTIONAL

BUSINESS
RETAIL
[Symbol] PRIMARY
[Symbol] SECONDARY
[Symbol] CONVENIENCE
[Symbol] SERVICE STATION
WHOLESALE
[Symbol] MERCHANTS
[Symbol] PETROLEUM
[Symbol] FARM PRODUCTS

RESIDENCE
[Symbol] 1-FAMILY
[Symbol] 2-FAMILY
[Symbol] MULTI-FAMILY
[Symbol] HOME OCCUPATION
[Symbol] TOURIST HOME
[Symbol] TRAILERS

PRODUCTION
MANUFACTURING
[Symbol] DURABLE
[Symbol] NON-DURABLE
MANUFACTURING SERVICES
[Symbol] UTILITIES
[Symbol] CONSTRUCTION
[Symbol] MISCELLANEOUS

TRANSPORTATION
NON-VEHICULAR
[Symbol] SUB-STATION
[Symbol] POWER LINES

VACANT
[Symbol] RESIDENCE
[Symbol] OTHER STRUCTURE

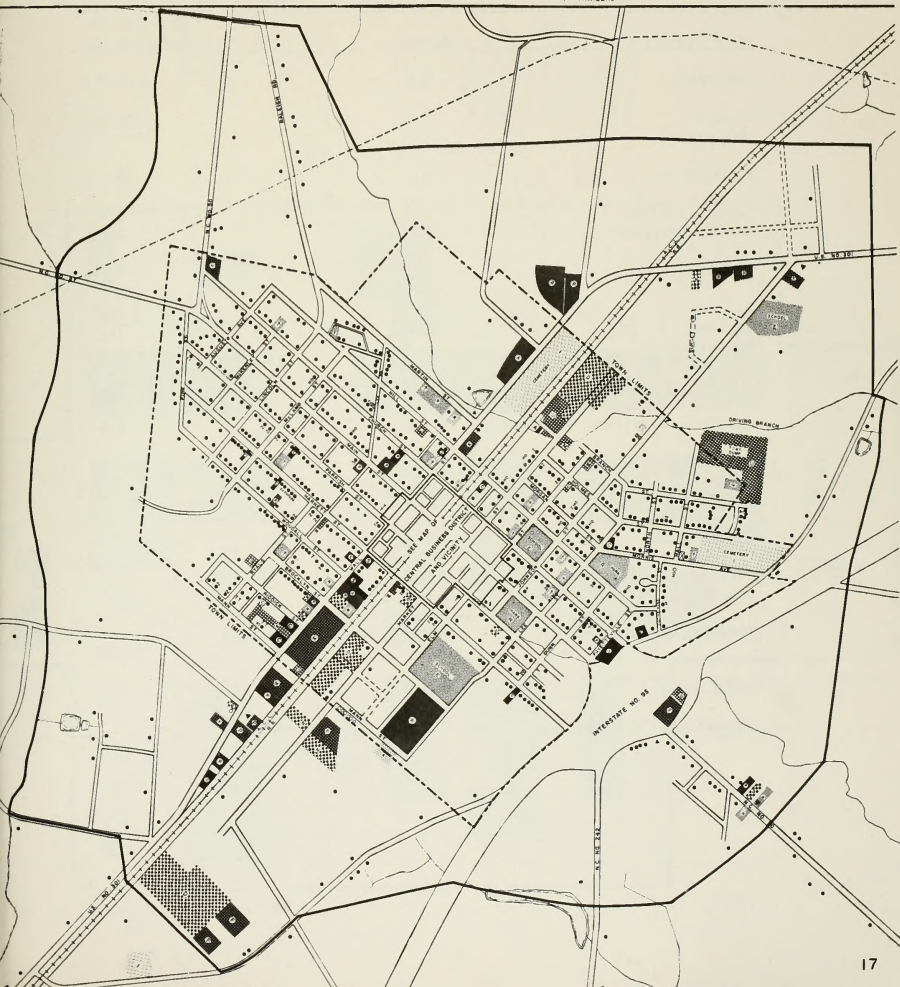


Table 10
EXISTING LAND USE
 June, 1962
 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND VICINITY

BENSON, N.C.

Land Use Type	Acres		Percent of Land in Use
BUSINESS	8.0		28.0
Retail	6.3		22.0
Wholesale	1.7		6.0
PRODUCTION	2.3		8.0
Manufacturing	1.5		5.2
Manuf. Services	.8		2.8
SERVICE	2.1		7.3
Business	.5		1.7
Consumer	1.2		4.2
Professional	.4		1.4
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL	.3		1.1
Health and Welfare (medical)	.3		1.1
TRANSPORTATION	13.3		46.5
Vehicular	13.3		46.5
RESIDENTIAL	2.6		9.1
Single-family	2.2		7.7
Other	.4		1.4
TOTAL LAND IN USE	28.6	PERCENT OF LAND IN USE	94.7
TOTAL LAND	30.2		
VACANT LAND & STRUCTURES	1.6	PERCENT OF LAND VACANT	5.3

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND VICINITY

EXISTING LAND USE

JUNE, 1962



BUSINESS

RETAIL

WHOLESALE

PRODUCTION

MANUFACTURING

MANUFACTURER'S REPRESENTATIVE

SERVICE

1101

CONSUMERS

PROFESSIONAL

SOCIAL & CULTURAL

☐

100

TRANSPORATION

	VEHICULAR	TERMINAL
<input type="checkbox"/>		

RESIDENTIAL

☐ H ☐ I ☐ FAMILY ☐ T ☐ TRAILER

2 FAMILY

VACANT

LAND & STRUCTURES

PREPARED FOR
THE REGION PLANNING BOARD IN 1962
BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

The preparation of this map was financed in part through an urban planning grant from the Housing and Home Finance Agency, under the provisions of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954.

LAND USE - DETAILED DATA

In this section, detailed information on the use of land in the various statistical areas of Benson are presented. The material is divided into seven subsections, each dealing with a major land use category. The subsections in their order of presentation are Business, Service, Transportation, Social and Cultural, Residential, Production and Vacant.

BUSINESS					
(Acres in use)					
	Town of Benson		Fringe	Analysis Area	
	<u>CBD</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Total</u>
<u>Retail</u>	6.3	6.1	12.4	2.2	14.6
Primary	1.3	.4	1.7	.0	1.7
Secondary	2.5	2.3	4.8	.3	5.1
Convenience	2.5	3.4	5.9	1.9	7.8
<u>Wholesale</u>	1.7	6.1	7.8	10.6	18.4
Merchants	.8	5.4	6.2	1.6	7.8
Petroleum	.0	.7	.7	1.8	2.5
Farm Products	.9	.0	.9	7.2	8.1
TOTAL	8.0	12.2	20.2	12.8	33.0

Approximately 5.2 percent (33 acres) of the developed land in the Benson Analysis Area is currently used by business establishments. More than one-half (18.4) acres) of this land is used for wholesale businesses; about 14.6 acres are used for retail businesses.

More than half of the wholesale land in use, 10.6 acres, is located in the Fringe. Principal wholesale uses, both in and out of Town, are livestock pens, produce warehouses, fertilizer warehouses, and building materials yards. Wholesale establishments are generally located along the Atlantic Coastline Railroad and U. S. 301 and on the fringe of the Central Business District.

About 60 percent of the retail establishments are located within the Town Limits; two-thirds of these are stores located in the Central Business District. Convenience shopping facilities - grocery and drug stores, service stations, etc. - are the predominate retail uses, followed closely by secondary retail establishments which market bulky, noncomparison items such as hardware, fertilizer, automobiles, farm equipment, etc. Primary retail establishments - comparison shopping stores selling clothing, jewelry, gifts, etc. - use only 1.7 acres of which 1.3 acres are concentrated in a small core of development along Main Street in the Central Business District.

SERVICE

(Acres in use)

	Town of Benson			Fringe	Analysis Area
	<u>CBD</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Total</u>
<u>Consumer</u>	1.2	10.6	11.8	6.8	18.6
Personal	1.1	1.8	2.9	3.6	6.5
Amusement	.0	8.6	8.6	3.2	11.8
Communication	.1	.2	.3	.0	.3
<u>Professional</u>	.4	.6	1.0	.6	1.6
Administrative	.4	.6	1.0	.6	1.6
<u>Business</u>	.5	1.4	1.9	.7	2.6
Repair	.5	1.4	1.9	.7	2.6
TOTAL	2.1	12.6	14.7	8.1	22.8

Approximately 3.6 percent or 22.8 acres of the developed land in the Benson Analysis Area are used for service establishments. Of this acreage, more than 80 percent is devoted to consumer service uses. The largest consumer service establishments from the standpoint of land area used are amusement services which include the ball park, the drive-in theatre, and the American Legion property. Personal services, particularly restaurants and cafes, use the second largest amount of consumer service land. Service establishments are generally mixed with business establishments and are located along Wall Street and Highway 301 and in the Central Business District.

TRANSPORTATION

(Acres in Use)

	Town of Benson			Fringe	Analysis Area
	<u>CBD</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Total</u>
<u>Vehicular</u>	13.3	145.8	159.1	124.3	283.4
Streets & Alleys	19.2	134.6	143.8	106.2	250.0
Railroads	3.5	11.2	14.7	18.1	32.8
Terminals	3.6	.0	.6	.0	.6
<u>Non-Vehicular</u>	.0	.2	.2	5.3	5.5
Sub-Stations	.0	.2	.2	.0	.2
Transmission lines	.0	.0	.0	5.3	5.3
TOTAL	13.3	146.0	159.3	129.6	288.9

Transportation uses, primarily vehicular rights-of-way, account for about 45.3 percent of 290 acres of the developed land in the Benson Analysis Area. Streets and alleys use 250 acres compared to 32.8 acres in railroad right-of-way. About one-third of the land (143.9 acres) within the Town of Benson is used for street and alley rights-of-way. The magnitude of this acreage can in large part be attributed to the fact that street rights-of-way average more than 60 feet in width within the Town.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

(Acres in use)

	CBD	Town of Benson		Fringe	Analysis Area
		Other	Total		Total
<u>Personal Development</u>	.0	18.4	18.4	4.4	22.8
Education	.0	7.7	7.7	4.4	12.1
Recreation	.0	5.6	5.6	.0	5.6
Religion	.0	5.1	5.1	.0	5.1
<u>Health & Welfare</u>	.3	13.2	13.5	.0	13.5
Institutional	.0	13.2	13.2	.0	13.2
Medical	.3	.0	.3	.0	.3
TOTAL	.3	31.6	31.9	4.4	36.3

Social and cultural uses, comprised mainly of churches, cemeteries, schools, parks and playgrounds, account for about 5.7 percent or 36.3 acres of the developed land in the Analysis Area. About 88 percent of this land is located within the Town Limits where 2 schools, 2 parks, 1 swimming pool, 13 churches, and 2 cemeteries are located. The only social and cultural use in the Fringe is a school. Most of the facilities in this category are located on the southeast side of Benson.

RESIDENTIAL

(Acres in use)

	CBD	Town of Benson		Fringe	Analysis Area
		Other	Total		Total
<u>Residences</u>	2.6	178.1	180.7	34.9	215.6
Single-family	2.2	169.5	171.7	34.8	206.5
Two-family	.3	5.8	6.1	.0	6.1
Multi-family	.0	1.8	1.8	.0	1.8
(3 to 6 fam.)					
Trailer	.1	1.0	1.1	.1	1.2
TOTAL	2.6	178.1	180.7	34.9	215.6

The second largest user of land in the Analysis Area and the largest user in the Town of Benson is residential development, particularly single-family residences. Some 215.6 acres of land or 33.8 percent of the developed land in the Analysis Area is used for residential purposes. More than 80 percent of the land in residential use is located within the Town Limits. Single family residential acreage amounts to approximately 207 acres or 96 percent of the total residential development; two-family residences, multi-family residences and trailers use 6.1, 1.8 and 1.2 acres, respectively. Additional information on Benson housing is contained in Chapter 4, HOUSING.

PRODUCTION
(Acres in use)

	Town of Benson			Fringe	Analysis Area
	<u>CBD</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Total</u>
<u>Manufacturing</u>	1.5	10.4	11.9	14.3	26.2
Durable	.1	9.9	10.0	11.2	21.2
Non-durable	1.4	.5	1.9	3.1	5.0
<u>Manufacturing Services</u>	.8	5.6	6.4	8.3	14.7
Utilities	.1	3.7	3.8	8.3	12.1
Construction	.1	.2	.3	.0	.3
Miscellaneous	.6	1.7	2.3	.0	2.3
TOTAL	2.3	16.0	18.3	22.6	40.9

Land uses classified as production establishments take up about 40.9 acres or 6.4 percent of the developed land in the Benson Analysis Area. More than half of the land in production uses is located in the Fringe.

Manufacturing establishments use about two-thirds of the land in production use. Durable manufacturing such as the veneer mill and saw mill operations use 26.2 acres or about 65 percent of the manufacturing land. The textile mill and the feed mills constitute the non-durable manufacturing development. Manufacturing establishments are generally situated along the railroad.

Manufacturing services such as dry cleaning plants, cold storage facilities, junk yards, municipal utilities, the garbage dump, etc. use about 14.7 acres of the land in production usage. The principal manufacturing service uses are utilities and include the municipal power plant and garbage dump.

VACANT
(Acres)

	Town of Benson		Fringe	Analysis Area
<u>CBD</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Total</u>
1.6	213.0	214.6	737.1	951.7

Vacant land comprises about 60 percent, 951.7 acres, of the 1589 acres of land in the Analysis Area. Some 737.1 acres of this land is located in the Benson Fringe; the remaining 214.6 acres are located within the Town Limits. Only 5 percent or 1.6 acres in the Central Business District is vacant; about one-third of the Town is not developed; the Fringe is about 78 percent undeveloped. Vacant land in the Town of Benson is largely concentrated near the corners.

LAND USE SUMMARY

Analysis Area - Of the 2.5 square miles of land area comprising the Benson Analysis Area, 40.1 percent is currently developed for non-farm uses. Transportation and residential uses predominate - taking 45.3 and 33.8 percent, respectively, of the developed land. The remaining developed land is distributed as follows: production - 6.4 percent; social and cultural - 5.7 percent; business 5.2 percent, and service-3.6 percent.

Fringe Area - Less than one-third of the 950 acres comprising the Benson Fringe is now developed with non-agricultural uses. Of the developed land, more than 60 percent is in street and railroad rights-of-way. About 16 percent is used for residences, 11 percent for production establishments, and the remaining 12 percent for business, service, and social and cultural uses.

Town of Benson - The Benson Town Limits enclose about 640 acres or one square mile of land of which two-thirds are developed. Vacant land is found primarily near the corners of the Town. Of the developed land, residential uses account for about 42.5 percent. Transportation uses, including street and railroad rights-of-way, take up some 37.4 percent of the developed land. Social and cultural uses account for some 7.5 percent of the developed land followed by business with 4.8 percent, production with 4.3 percent, and services with 3.5 percent.

Central Business District - The Benson Central Business District contains about 30.2 acres of land or less than 5 percent of the land within the Town Limits. Some 95 percent of this land is in use, leaving only 1.6 acres undeveloped or vacant. About 46.5 percent of the developed land is used for street, alley and railroad rights-of-way. Business uses, comprised largely of retail establishments, use 6.3 acres or 22 percent of the developed land. Residential, production, and service uses take up 2.6, 2.2 and 2.1 acres of land, respectively. The remaining .3 acre is used for Social and Cultural facilities.

LAND DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

As shown by the existing land use maps, the arrangement of land uses in Benson demonstrates a natural zoning which has occurred in that land uses serving similar functions or having similar characteristics have generally located near each other. There are exceptions, though, where development has occurred in isolated spots or where incompatible land use types have been mixed.

Retail business and service establishments are concentrated largely in the Central Business District and along Wall Street indicating the importance of intensity of activity and ease of accessibility to their operations.

Wholesale establishments are located around the fringe of the Central Business District and along U. S. 301 and the A. C. L. Railroad. These establishments usually require large sites which are near the businesses which they supply and which are served by good transportation facilities.

Manufacturing and manufacturing services establishments, which normally require large, level sites and good highways and railway facilities, are located on such sites along U. S. 301 and the A.C.L. Railroad to the northeast and southwest of the Central Business District.

Residential areas extend from Wall Street to the Town Limits on the northwest side of Town with the exception of vacant areas in the north and west corners; on the southeast side of Town residential development extends from Harnett Street northeast to vacant lands near the Town Limits. Residential development has generally spread from the central core of Benson to the northwest and to the east along the higher ground of the community.

Social and cultural land uses are located in the midst of the residential areas which they serve. This is particularly true of churches; however, school and park development has been concentrated in the area southeast of the railroad. The only recreation facility north of the railroad is the swimming pool.

Within the Town Limits there are large tracts of vacant land near each of the corners of the Town. Most of this land is suitable for future development; however, the vacant areas near the western and southern corners would be more difficult to provide with adequate storm drainage and sanitary sewer facilities than would the vacant areas near the northern and eastern Town corners.

LAND USE PROBLEMS

Benson has many physical features of which it can be proud - its wide streets, its street trees, its sidewalks, its large residential lots, etc.; however, there are areas of Town where land development problems exist.

In spite of the natural zoning which has occurred with similar uses generally being located together, there are a few spots in which businesses have located in residential areas creating undesirable conditions such as noise, increased traffic, decreased property values, etc. Development has occurred in some areas which are difficult to serve with municipal sewerage and where soil conditions are not suitable for septic tanks.

In some parts of Town, the land has been subdivided into blocks which are unusually small, increasing the amount of land required for street rights-of-way and increasing the amount of streets which must be built and maintained. Some lots have been sold and developed which are substandard by any measure - they are too narrow, too shallow, and do not abut on an adequate public street. Structures have in some instances been built with little regard for property lines, adjacent building lines, street lines, etc. creating undesirable conditions such as fire and health hazards.

There is a scarcity of park and playground space on the northwest side of Town. The school site on Church Street is inadequate in size and is separated from its playground by a walk of about 500 feet which requires the crossing of two streets.

These are a few of the land use problems which Benson now has; steps to be taken to alleviate these and other current problems and to prevent similar problems will be discussed in the final section of this report.

chapter 4

HOUSING

Because residential development is perhaps the most important single use of land in an urban community, this chapter is devoted to a study of the housing conditions, types, densities, problems, etc. which are found in the residential areas of Benson.

H O U S I N G

In conjunction with the land use survey, a survey of residential structures in and around Benson was also conducted during which houses were graded on their condition as indicated by their external appearance. The purpose of the survey was to determine the amount and location of above average, average, deteriorating, and dilapidated housing in the community. The results of the survey are indicated on the External Housing Appearance Map and in Tables 11 and 12.

Residential structures were judged primarily on their external structural appearance; however, other conditions such as inadequate lot dimensions and poor maintenance of the lot and accessory buildings also influenced the grading. Although the survey results are extremely subjective with regard to the grades of individual structures, the results do indicate where pockets of substandard housing exist or are developing.

The criteria by which housing was judged during the survey were as follows:

- a. above average - This housing is superior in size, value, and general appearance and requires normal maintenance practices.
- b. average - Houses of this classification are average in structural and lot appearance. Some need minor repairs such as painting or limited replacement of shingles, siding, etc.; the remainder need normal maintenance.
- c. deteriorating - Such housing is generally below average in structural quality and appearance and requires extensive repairs to walls, roof, foundation, or chimney or replacement of steps, windows, or doors.
- d. dilapidated - Housing in this category is generally unfit for habitation and repairs needed are so extensive that structural razing is usually more practical than reconstruction.

Table 11
HOUSING: APPEARANCE, TYPE AND NUMBER
Benson, N. C., June, 1962

(Within the Town Limits)

ABOVE AVERAGE

<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total Units</u>
38	1-family	38	
<u>1</u>	2-family	<u>2</u>	
39	SUB-TOTAL	40	5.5

AVERAGE

<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total Units</u>
469	1-family	469	
22	2-family	44	
1	3-family	3	
1	4-family	4	
10	Trailer	10	
<u>3</u>	Vacant	<u>3</u>	
506	SUB-TOTAL	533	72.9

DETERIORATING

<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total Units</u>
87	1-family	87	
4	2-family	8	
1	4-family	4	
1	5-family	5	
<u>1</u>	6-family	<u>6</u>	
94	SUB-TOTAL	110	15.0

DILAPIDATED

<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total Units</u>
43	1-family	43	
1	2-family	2	
<u>3</u>	Vacant	<u>3</u>	
47	SUB-TOTAL	48	6.6
<u>686</u>	GRAND TOTAL	<u>731</u>	<u>100.0</u>

BENSON NORTH CAROLINA

MAP 5

EXTERNAL HOUSING APPEARANCE

PREPARED FOR
THE BENSON PLANNING BOARD IN 1962
BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING



0 400 800
SCALE IN FEET

The preparation of this map was financed in part
through an urban planning grant from the Housing
and Home Finance Agency, under the provisions
of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954,
as amended

CONDITION
ABOVE AVERAGE
AVERAGE
DETERIORATING
OLAPIDATEO

TREATMENT NEEDED
○ NORMAL MAINTENANCE
○ NORMAL MAINTENANCE, MINOR REPAIR
● MAJOR REPAIR
● DESTRUCTION, MAJOR REPAIR

○_v VACANT
○_n NO. OF HOUSING UNITS

BOUNDARY OF ANALYSIS AREA ———

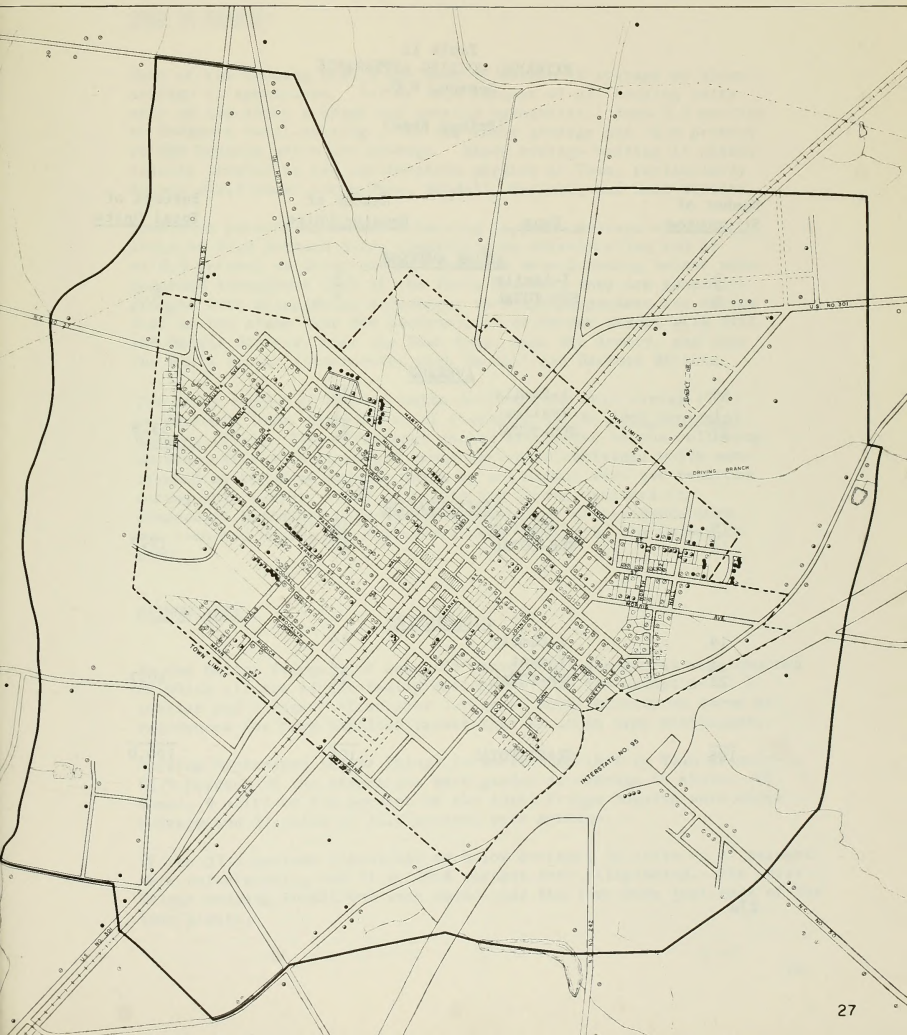


Table 12
EXTERNAL HOUSING APPEARANCE
Benson, N.C.

(Fringe Area)

<u>Number of Structures</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number of Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total Units</u>
	<u>ABOVE AVERAGE</u>		
$\frac{9}{9}$	1-family	$\frac{9}{9}$	8.5
	SUB-TOTAL		
	<u>AVERAGE</u>		
$\frac{56}{1}$	1-family	$\frac{56}{1}$	53.8
$\frac{1}{57}$	Trailer	$\frac{1}{57}$	
	SUB-TOTAL		
	<u>DETERIORATING</u>		
$\frac{18}{18}$	1-family	$\frac{18}{18}$	17.0
	SUB-TOTAL		
	<u>DILAPIDATED</u>		
$\frac{19}{3}$	1-family	$\frac{19}{3}$	20.7
$\frac{3}{22}$	Vacant	$\frac{3}{22}$	
	SUB-TOTAL		
<u>106</u>	GRAND TOTAL	<u>106</u>	<u>100.0</u>

TOWN OF BENSON

Most of the housing within the Town of Benson is average or above average in appearance. 573 or 78.4 percent of all housing units make up the above average and average categories. Some 5.5 percent of Benson's total housing units are above average and 72.9 percent or 533 housing units are average. Above average housing is predominantly located in the northwestern portion of Town, particularly in new development along Pine, Woodall, Harnett, and Main Streets.

Some 21.6 percent of Benson's housing is below average with 110 units or 15.0 percent being classified as deteriorating and 48 or 6.6 percent as dilapidated. Isolated deteriorating houses were recorded throughout much of the Town; however, they are generally grouped with dilapidated structures in blighted pockets and strips such as the areas near the intersection of Farmer Street with Hill and Martin Streets, near the Town Dump, near the Armory, and near the Ryals Street intersection with Woodall and Harnett Streets.

The total number of housing units derived from this survey (731) is somewhat lower than the total indicated by the 1960 Census of Housing (787). This difference can be attributed to the following: housing units such as single rooms rented in dwellings which were counted as separate housing units by the Census were not recorded during this survey; rooms in hotels and living quarters in commercial buildings used as permanent places of residence were not recorded during the survey but were counted by the Census in 1960.

FRINGE AREA

In the Benson Fringe Area some 106 residential structures were counted of which all are single-family residences with the exception of 1 trailer and 3 vacant structures. Many of these structures serve as residences for farm families rather than as urban type residences.

Housing appearance in the Fringe is worse than that in Town as only 62.3 percent of the structures were graded as average or above. Of these, 9 units or 8.5 percent of the total Fringe housing were above average and 57 units or 53.8 percent were average.

Of the 37.7 percent classified as below average, 18 units or 17 percent were deteriorating and 22 or 20.8 percent were dilapidated. The worst Fringe housing conditions were noted near the Town Dump just east of the Town Limits.

HOUSING DENSITIES

As indicated in the land use section of this report, about 215.6 acres are used for residential development in the Town of Benson. Development densities (number of housing units per acre) are lower in the Fringe than in Town. Residential densities by housing type for the Benson Analysis Area are as follows:

<u>Housing Type</u>	<u>No. of Units</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Density</u> <u>(housing units per acre)</u>
1-family	759	207.7	3.6
2-family	56	6.1	9.2
<u>multi-family</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>12.2</u>
Average	837	215.6	3.9

Although the average densities by housing type for Benson are well below the maximum densities for healthful housing recommended by the American Public Health Association, there are pockets of housing where single-family residential densities are above the suggested maximum of seven housing units per acre. These areas are generally the same as those areas of substandard housing appearance mentioned earlier.

Most of Benson's residents are housed in single-family residences. Only 9 percent of the housing units are found in two-family or multi-family residential structures. Most of the multi-family residences are located in the central business district fringe where large houses have been divided into apartments. The largest groupings of duplexes are found on Harnett and Parrish Streets. According to the 1960 Census of Housing about 46 percent of the residences in Benson were renter occupied in April, 1960.

HOUSING PROBLEMS

As indicated in previous sections, the quality of housing in the Benson Analysis Area is generally good. There are, however, a few small areas of dilapidated housing and a number of deteriorating structures. There are also areas where residences are concentrated too closely, creating potential health and safety hazards. These areas of substandard housing have been discussed previously and are shown on the Housing Appearance Map.

To eliminate undesirable housing conditions, the Town of Benson needs to adopt and enforce adequate minimum housing and building codes as well as other related codes and ordinances. Such action would require the upgrading of present housing conditions and would prevent the development of additional problems. Families displaced by code enforcement could be housed in the public housing units which the Town is planning to construct with Federal assistance. For any housing improvement program to be successful; however, the primary impetus must come through the actions of individual property owners in their private home improvement and maintenance activities. Municipal actions to eliminate Benson's housing problems will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

chapter 5

WATER SUPPLY SEWAGE DISPOSAL STREETS & TRAFFIC

It is necessary to know the adequacy of certain community services and facilities and their capacity for expansion before suitable plans for future development can be made. For this reason, Benson's water, sewer, and street system are examined in some detail in this chapter.

W A T E R S U P P L Y

A factor of critical importance to the development potential of any community is the quantity and quality of the water supply which is available or can be made available. Without a good supply of water available, a Town has little chance of encouraging new industries to locate within its environs.

WATER SOURCE

The water supply of Benson and the surrounding area is provided by a combination of private and public wells which tap the Tuscaloosa water-bearing strata underlying the area. Most of the existing development is served by water from the seven wells of the Benson public water supply. These wells range in depth from 375 to 800 feet.

WATER QUALITY

Analysis of water from the wells which provide for the Benson water supply indicate that the waters range from soft to moderately hard and tend to be alkaline. Five of the seven wells produce water with an iron content well above the maximum standard of 0.3 parts per million recommended by the United States Public Health Service and the American Water Works Association; however, two wells (2 and 5) have waters with an iron content below the recommended maximum. Waters containing excessive amounts of iron sometimes are discolored, have tastes and odors, stain plumbing fixtures, stain fabrics during washing, stain industrial products, or modify the dyes used in industrial processes. There is presently no municipal treatment of town water.

WATER QUANTITY

The existing wells are capable of producing some 533 gallons of water per minute or 767,520 gallons per day; however, the high iron content in most of the well water requires the Town to depend on those wells free from iron excesses for the bulk of the water supply. Wells 2 and 5, which have waters with a low iron content, are together capable of producing 325 gallons per minute.

WATER DISTRIBUTION

The water distribution system consists of 7 wells; pumps at all wells; a 100,000 gallon elevated storage tank; a 100,000 gallon underground storage tank; one 10-inch main along E. Market Street; 6-inch mains along most of the principal streets; 2-inch lines serving some outlying areas; fire hydrants along the 6-inch mains; more than 1,000 service connections, and a number of valves and other fittings. The water distribution system is shown on the following map.

BENSON NORTH CAROLINA

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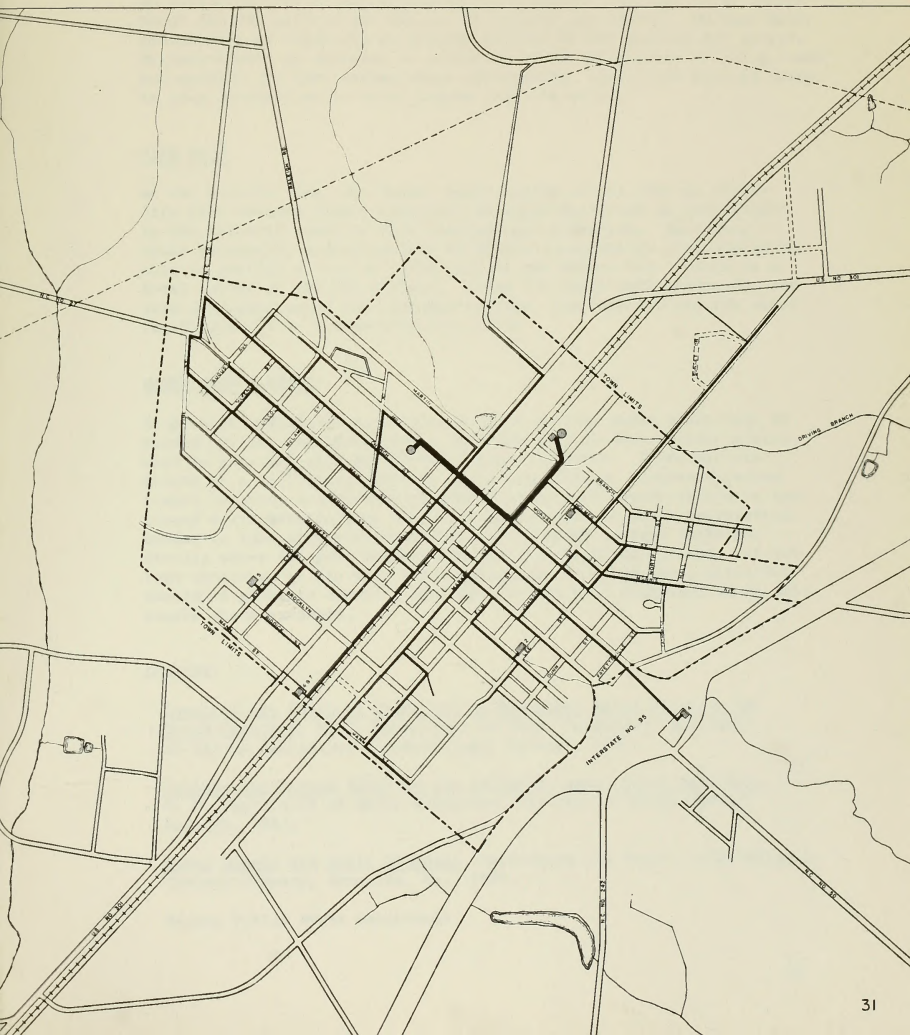


0 400 800
SCALE IN FEET

MAP 6

WATER SYSTEM

- 1 IN. LINE
- 2 IN. LINE
- 6 IN. MAIN
- 10 IN. MAIN
- WELLS, 1-7
- STORAGE TANKS



WATER USE

There are more than 1,000 municipal water service connections serving an estimated service population of 2,600 people. Average usage totals about 260,000 gallons per day or 181 gallons per minute. Maximum daily consumption is estimated at 416,000 gallons or 289 gallons per minute. Maximum hourly consumption is estimated at 34,580 gallons or 578 gallons per minute. To meet maximum-hour use demands, water from storage tanks is used in addition to water pumped from the wells.

FIRE FLOW

At the present time, the Benson water system is not able to supply fire flow amounts (water required for fighting fires) as recommended by the National Board of Fire Underwriters standards. According to these standards, a municipality of Benson's population size should be able to provide a flow of 1,750 gallons per minute for 5 hours or a total amount of 525,000 gallons. Using its total well production and both its underground and elevated storage, the Town can provide about two-thirds of the recommended fire flow.

WATER SUPPLY NEEDS

To provide additional quantities of good quality water which will be needed for any extensive future development, the Benson water system must be provided with additional sources of water. Since surface waters of a sufficient quantity are not available, studies directed toward locating and developing additional ground waters should be continued until satisfactory wells are sunk. Another major improvement needed is that of providing additional elevated storage tanks for storing water for peak consumption and fire-fighting demands. If the Town continues to use well water containing iron excesses, attention should be given to treating municipal waters by a technique which will remove these excesses.

SOURCES:

Chemical and Physical Character of Municipal Water Supplies in North Carolina, N. C. Department of Water Resources, Division of Stream Sanitation and Hydrology, Raleigh, 1961.

Geology and Ground Water in the Goldsboro Area, North Carolina, N. D. Department of Water Resources, Division of Ground Water, Raleigh, 1960.

Water Supply and Waste Disposal, Hardenburg and Rodie, International Textbook Company, Scranton, Pa., 1961.

Benson Public Works Department.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

A satisfactory method of disposing of domestic and industrial wastes is just as important to the well-being of a community as is the provision of an adequate water supply. Within the Benson community, three methods of disposing of these wastes are used. Most of the sewage is channeled through the Benson sanitary sewer system to Driving Branch; however, small quantities of wastes in outlying areas are disposed of through private septic tanks and outdoor toilet facilities.

OUTDOOR TOILET FACILITIES

Most of the outdoor toilets are situated in those areas of the Town where housing conditions are substandard. Such facilities pose a constant health threat and should be eliminated.

SEPTIC TANKS

A number of homes which are located outside the area served by the Benson sewer system use septic tank drainage fields for sewage disposal. The adequacy of such disposal depends primarily on soil conditions, including permeability, ground water levels, soil depth, slope, etc. Where soil conditions are not favorable, wastes do not percolate into the soil and unpleasant conditions and health hazards develop.

Soil conditions to the north, east, and west of Benson are generally suitable for septic tank use; high ground water levels and poor drainage in the soils to the south and southwest of the Town make the area from Parrish Street south to Mingo Creek generally unsuitable for septic tank use. Before permitting any additional septic tank installation, the Town of Benson should be sure that soil conditions and lot sizes are adequate for proper septic tank operation.

SANITARY SEWERAGE

The existing sewer system which serves some 775 sewer connections consists largely of 6- and 8- inch lateral sewers. About 800 feet of 12- inch branch sewer is used along Wall Street where sewage from the northwestern portion of Benson is collected and channeled into the 15- inch Driving Branch trunk sewer. Sewage from the southeastern portions of the Town generally flows in a northeasterly direction, entering the Driving Branch trunk sewer at Market, Branch, and Hall Streets. The Driving Branch trunk sewer carries sewage to the Imhoff tank after which it is released through an outfall line to Driving Branch. The sewer system is shown on Map 7.

BENSON
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SCALE IN FEET

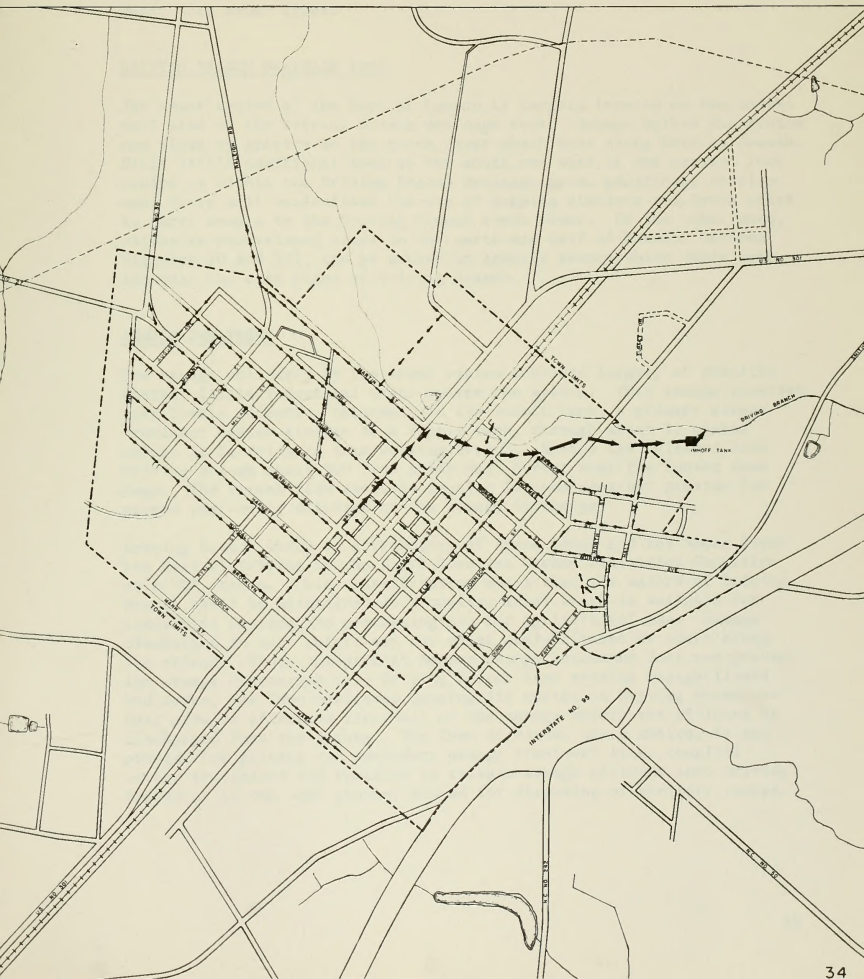
MAP 7

SANITARY SEWERS

→ → → 8 IN. OR LESS

→ → 12 IN.

→ 15 IN.



SEWAGE QUANTITY

The quantities of sewage measured in Benson sewers, particularly during wet seasons, are considerably higher than the quantities which are usually produced by a service population equal to that in Benson. Wet season quantities run as high as 160 gallons of sewage per capita per day as compared to expected amounts of 100 gallons per capita per day. These excessive quantities are attributed to infiltration of ground water into sewer lines.

DRIVING BRANCH DRAINAGE AREA

The sewer system of the Town of Benson is largely located on the southwest side of the Driving Branch drainage area. Sewage within the system now flows by gravity to the trunk sewer which runs along Driving Branch. Since little additional area to the south and west of the present Town Limits is within the Driving Branch drainage area, additional development there will necessitate the use of pumping stations and force mains to carry sewage to the Driving Branch trunk sewer. On the other hand, extensive undeveloped areas to the north and east of Benson, between Highways 50 and 301, can be served by gravity sewers which drain both the east and west sides of Driving Branch.

SEWAGE TREATMENT

The sewage collected by the sewer system consists largely of domestic wastes; little industrial waste enters the system. This sewage receives very little effective treatment in the Imhoff tank, a primary sewage treatment device similar to a septic tank, through which it passes before it is released into Driving Branch. Wastes are released into Driving Branch about 500 feet below Hall Street near the Benson town dump. The stream flow there is usually low and does not provide for proper year-round dilution of the sewage discharge.

Driving Branch which is a tributary of Hanna Creek and the Neuse River has been classified by the North Carolina Stream Sanitation Committee as a "D" stream. This classification means that the waters of Driving Branch shall be maintained at a quality level which is suitable for industrial cooling and processing and for agricultural use. Sewage discharged in such waters may not cause unsightliness or odors along the stream. Since the present Benson sewage treatment does not prevent the sewage discharged into Driving Branch from causing unsightliness and odors, the Town must stop dumping its wastes in Driving Branch or must provide effective treatment of the sewage before the effluent is discharged into the stream. The Town of Benson has a choice, it can provide for primary and secondary sewage treatment (i.e. complete sewage treatment) and continue to release sewage effluent into Driving Branch or it can seek another method for disposing of sanitary sewage.

Studies by the engineering firm of L. E. Wooten and Company have indicated that providing for both primary and secondary treatment at a sewage treatment plant located on Falling Creek on the northwest side of Interstate 95 is the most feasible solution to this problem.

SOURCES:

Water Supply and Waste Disposal, Hardenburg and Rodie, International Texbook Company, Scranton, Pa., 1961.

Preliminary Report on Sewage Treatment and Disposal, Town of Benson, North Carolina, L. E. Wooten and Company, Raleigh, N. C., 1961. Public Works Department, Town of Benson, N. C.

Soils Suitable For Septic Tank Filter Fields, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Information Bulletin Number 243.

STREETS AND TRAFFIC

STREET SYSTEM

Benson's streets are generally laid out according to a gridiron plan with a set of northeast-southwest streets perpendicular to a set of northwest-southeast streets. The principal northeast-southwest street is Wall Street; Main Street is the major northwest-southeast street.

Many of the Town's street rights-of-way are sixty-six feet wide, a dimension considerably larger than the fifty feet often used for municipal streets. For this reason and because there are a number of small blocks in Benson, more than 105 acres or one-fourth of Benson's developed land is used for street and alley rights-of-way.

In spite of the ample rights-of-way, none of Benson's internal streets have more than two lanes for moving traffic except at major inter-sections where on-street parking has been restricted and where additional traffic lanes have been provided for turning vehicles. On-street parking is permitted along both sides of most of Benson's streets.

STREET IMPROVEMENTS

There are about 16 miles of streets and alleys within the Town of which approximately two-thirds are paved. Most of the unpaved streets are located in the newer residential areas near the undeveloped portions of the Town. There are also unimproved streets in some of the substandard housing areas.

About one-half of Benson's streets have curbs of one kind or another; however, much of this curbing is not combined with gutters and therefore does little to facilitate drainage. Most of the adequate curb and gutter improvements are found along the older, more central streets as are most of the sidewalks.

To provide for needed improvements, a street improvements program should be undertaken with each needed project studied, its cost estimated, and a priority assigned to it. Financing of such improvements could be by joint property owner-town participation with some state aid.

BENSON
NORTH CAROLINA

MAP 8

AVERAGE DAILY
TRAFFIC VOLUMES, 1961

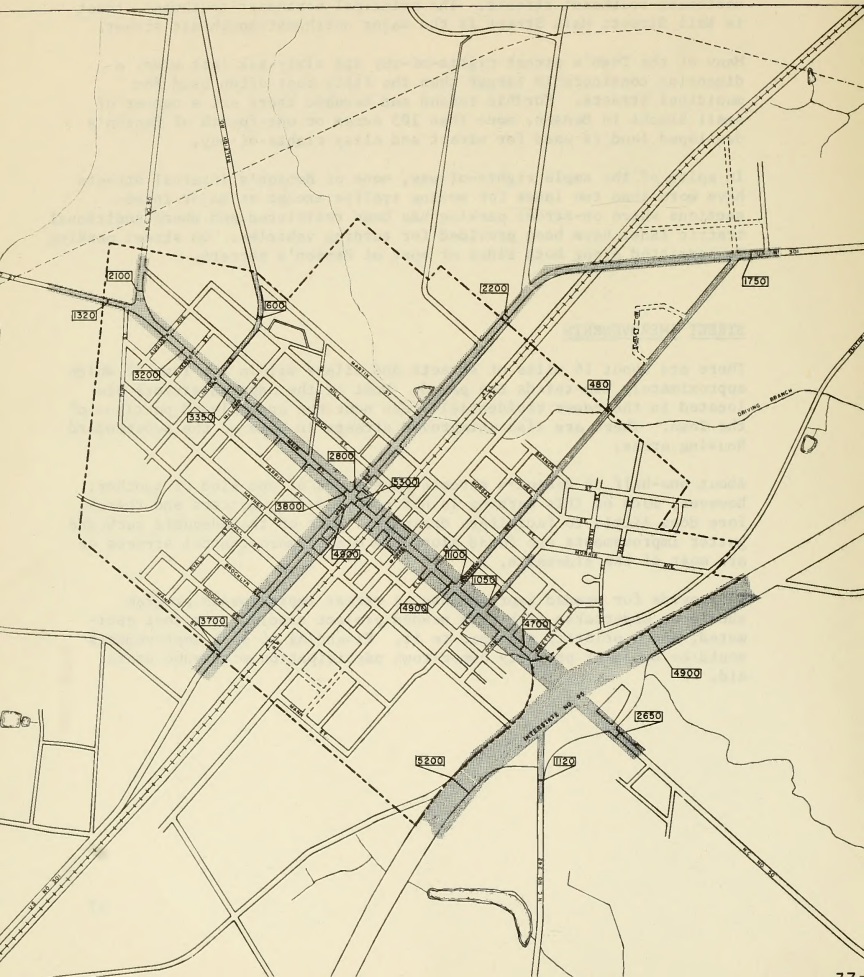
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THOUSANDS OF VEHICLES

SOURCE: NORTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY COMMISSION



TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The principal streets and highways passing through or adjacent to Benson are Interstate 95, U.S. 301, N.C. 50, N.C. 242, and N.C. 27. According to data compiled by the North Carolina Highway Commission, the primary movement of traffic in the area is along Interstate 95 which had a 1961 average daily traffic (a.d.t.) volume of about 5,000 vehicles through the Benson interchange. Other highway a.d.t. volumes recorded at locations near the Benson town limits were as follows:

- U.S. 301, south - 2,700 vehicles
- U.S. 301, north - 2,200 vehicles
- N.C. 50, east - 2,650 vehicles
- N.C. 50, north - 2,100 vehicles
- N.C. 27, west - 1,320 vehicles
- N.C. 242, south - 1,120 vehicles

Primary movements of the traffic through the center of Benson are along Wall Street (U.S. 301), the northern boundary of the central business district, and along Main Street (N. C. 50) which bisects the central business district. Average daily traffic volumes measured at the intersection of these two streets for 1961 were:

- Main Street, west - 3,800 vehicles
- Main Street, east - 5,300 vehicles
- Wall Street, north - 2,800 vehicles
- Wall Street, south - 4,900 vehicles

The accompanying map shows 1961 average daily traffic volumes as recorded by the North Carolina Highway Commission.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Traffic congestion is not a serious problem at the present time except in the vicinity of the central business district where there are many conflicts between cross-town and shopper vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic. This congestion is most noticeable during peak shopping hours.

To alleviate this congestion and generally improve the movement of traffic in Benson, several types of improvements are needed, including the development of a thoroughfare system, the separation of through and local traffic, the provision of improved off-street parking facilities in the central business area, etc. Plans for a major thoroughfare system are discussed in the final section of this study.

chapter 6

DEVELOPMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the studies discussed in previous chapters and basic urban planning techniques, a development plan for the Town of Benson has been prepared. Its principal features and recommendations for its use as a guide for future development are discussed in this chapter.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In previous chapters, Benson's regional and physical setting, its economic and population characteristics, its land use pattern, its housing, and its water, sewer, and street systems have been examined in some detail. Development problems, trends, and potentials have been analyzed and discussed. In this chapter, a plan for the future physical development of Benson is described. It is based upon both the findings of earlier chapters and basic urban planning techniques.

The purpose of the development plan is to serve as a guide for the location of the future homes, factories, stores, and other land uses of the community and for the municipal facilities which will be needed to serve them. The plan is intentionally general in scope since more detailed studies will be needed before specific development is undertaken. Some of these studies and recommendations for implementing the development plan and for alleviating some of the existing problems are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Land development plans for urban areas are usually based upon two types of requirements - future space requirements and locational requirements. Space requirements are used in estimating the number of acres of land which will be needed for community development at a given date. These estimates are derived from community population forecasts and are only as reliable as the future population estimates are. On the other hand, locational requirements are used in determining which land areas in the community are most suitable for each given land use type regardless of when such land will be needed or used for such development.

As indicated in Chapter 2, population forecasts for the Benson community, based upon past trends, are rather pessimistic, estimating a population increase of only about 200 people by 1970 and 300 people by 1980 or an increase of 7.1 percent from 1960 to 1970 and of 3.3 percent from 1970 to 1980. The space requirements which this increased population would likely require by 1980 would be only about 50 acres or one-fourth of the vacant land within the Town of Benson at the present time.

Rather than limit the development plan by these space requirements, it has been based upon the assumption that the most appropriate locations for the expansion of Benson's residential, commercial, industrial, and other land use areas should be selected, planned, and protected for such future use regardless of the prospective use date. For this reason, location standards have been the principal basis for the development plan.

The Benson development plan is divided into two sections. The first section deals with land uses and their appropriate locations and is called the Land Use Plan; the second deals with the major streets in Benson which are or will likely be needed to serve the various land uses and is called the Sketch Thoroughfare Plan. Both plans are illustrated graphically by Map 9.

LAND USE PLAN

Locational Standards

The locational standards which have been used in preparing the land use plan are as follows:

1. Development requiring municipal sewerage should be contained within the areas which can be served by sanitary sewers draining by gravity to a Falling Branch sewage treatment plant.
2. Where possible, vacant portions of existing development should be filled in before new development areas are begun.
3. New development should compliment existing development; incompatible land use areas should be separated by appropriate buffers.
4. Swampy areas or other areas having a high water table should not be intensively developed but should generally be retained as open land.
5. Land uses producing large quantities of sewage should be located as near as possible to the sewage treatment plant to reduce the length of large capacity sewers which must be constructed and maintained.
6. Smoke, noise, and odor emitting uses should be located on the northeast side of Town to prevent the prevailing wind from blowing such products across developed areas.
7. Wholesale and industrial uses should be located near both railroad and major street facilities on large, relatively level sites.
8. Retail and service activities, with the exception of neighborhood and highway serving facilities, should be located in the central business area.
9. Community-serving public and semi-public facilities, such as social and cultural uses, should be located near major streets so as to be easily accessible from all parts of the community.
10. Recreation centers should be located near the residential neighborhoods which they serve.

BENSON NORTH CAROLINA

MAP 9

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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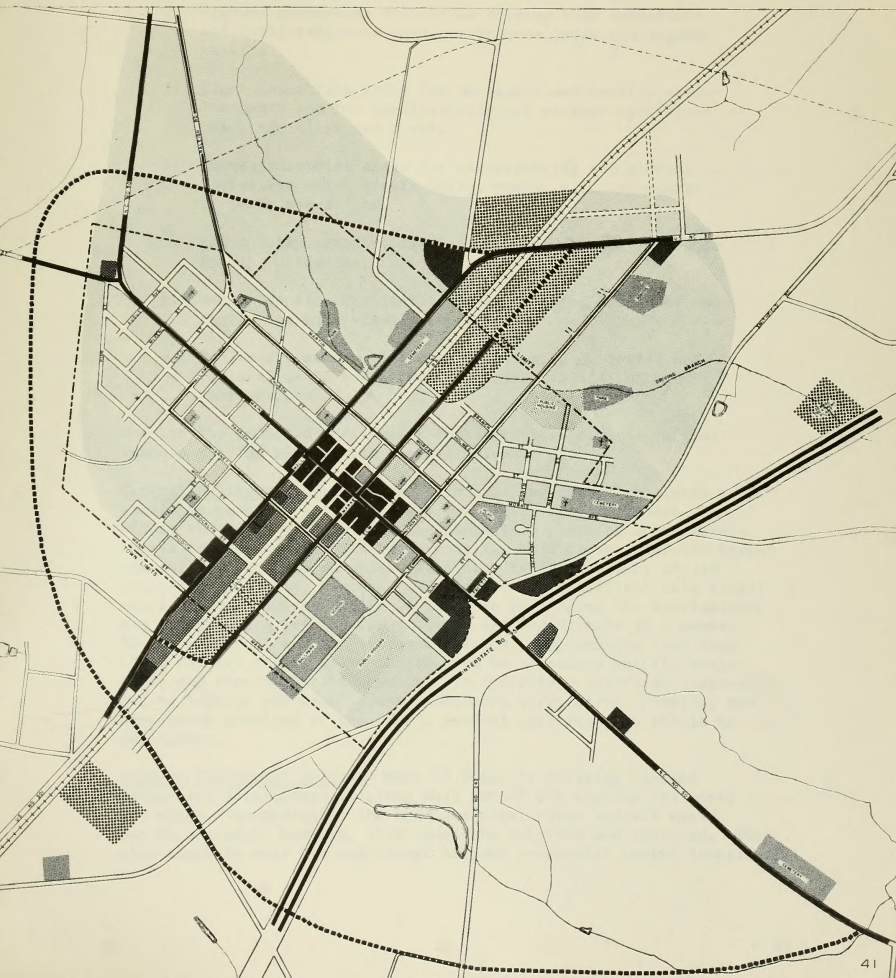
0 400 800
SCALE IN FEET

LAND USE

- COMMERCIAL**
 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
 HIGHWAY
INDUSTRIAL
 LIGHT
 HEAVY
RESIDENTIAL
 SINGLE FAMILY
 MULTI-FAMILY
 PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC

SKETCH THOROUGHFARES

- EXISTING**
 MAJOR
 MINOR
PROPOSED
 MAJOR
 MINOR



Plan Components

As shown on the Land Use Plan, Map 9, generalized areas have been delineated for seven types of land use development.

1. The central business district, composed primarily of retail and service establishments serving both vehicular and pedestrian customers.
2. Highway commercial facilities serving both transients and local residents with convenience goods and highway service.
3. Light industrial areas for wholesale and service establishments and for manufacturing and storage operations which are clean and quiet.
4. Heavy industrial areas for manufacturing and storage activities which create noise, smoke, dirt, or odors in their operations.
5. Low density residential areas composed mainly of single family residences.
6. Medium density residential areas composed mainly of two-family and multi-family residences.
7. Public and semi-public areas consisting of social and cultural uses, commercial recreation facilities and similar uses.

Some of the proposed development considerations for the various component areas of the plan are as follows.

Central Business District (CBD) The existing central business area should be retained as the primary commercial area in Benson. An effort should be made to keep the comparison shopping core concentrated in the area bounded by Main Street, Elm Street, Parrish Street and Wall Street. To do this may require the replacement of low intensity wholesale, storage, and residential facilities with retail stores. Some thought should be given to developing the southeastern and northeastern fringes along Church and Elm Streets as a center for governmental and professional offices. Appropriate land uses along Parrish Street would continue to be secondary retail, wholesale, and service establishments. To coordinate future development and to improve the traffic and pedestrian circulation, parking, and appearance problems of the CBD, a central district plan should be undertaken.

Highway Commercial Centers Most of Benson's existing highway commercial development is along Wall Street and Highway 301 north and south. According to the land use plan, these centers would not be expanded; however, they should be retained and improved. The plan suggests only two additional highway commercial center locations,

one near the N.C. 50 - N.C. 27 intersection and one on the Benson side of the N.C. 50 - 1. 95 interchange. The former center would provide convenience goods and services to the residents of north-west Benson and the N.C. 50 and N.C. 27 travelers; the latter could be developed with motel, restaurant, and service station facilities to serve 1.95 and N.C. 50 travelers.

Light Industry The wholesale and light industrial areas to the southwest of the central business district should continue in such use with light manufacturing, storage, repair, and wholesaling establishments located along both sides of the railroad between Wall Street and Market Street. Only clean, quiet operations should be located in this area.

Heavy Industry The existing veneer mill and sawmill sites on both the south and north sides of town are shown on the plan as heavy industry areas. Additional heavy industrial locations are planned to the north of the town limits along both sides of the railroad. Industrial operations causing noise, smoke, odors, dirt, etc. could be located in these areas; however, appropriate steps to minimize the nuisance created should be taken.

Residential Development Residential development, predominantly single-family is indicated on the plan as filling in vacant areas in Town and spreading to the north and northeast. Medium-density residential development, two-family and multi-family residences, is shown in areas of existing apartments, in two proposed public housing sites to the northeast and southeast of the central area, and in private apartment areas to the south of the CBD.

Public and Semi-Public The land use plan shows public and semi-public development continuing at existing church, school, and recreation sites, with two additional park-playground facilities provided along Driving Branch near Wall Street and near the proposed public housing site.

SKETCH THOROUGHFARE PLAN

As indicated in Chapter 5, Streets and Traffic, traffic volumes on Benson's streets are not sufficiently high at the present time to warrant appreciable thoroughfare construction. However, there is a need to make optimum use of existing street facilities so as to eliminate the congestion which occurs in the vicinity of the central business district during peak business hours. A thoroughfare system is needed which will separate through traffic and local traffic and which will enable local traffic to get from one part of Benson to another without having to go through the central area.

The Sketch Thoroughfare plan shown on Map 9 and proposals presented here are preliminary and should not be adopted until the feasibility of the system as a whole and its various components are studied in some detail.

Existing Facilities

As shown on the sketch plan, Main Street and Wall Street will continue to be the principal thoroughfares for Benson's through traffic; however, parallel facilities should be developed to carry local traffic to the central business district and across town, thus reducing the use of Main Street and Wall Street for local traffic. Hill and Harnett would serve this function as northwest-southwest streets and Market Street would serve as a northeast-southwest crosstown. Church and Parrish Streets might be used effectively to carry central business district to off-street parking areas. Johnston Street would serve as the principal collector for residential traffic as development spreads to the northeast and Raleigh Road will serve the same function as development spreads to the northwest.

Proposed Facilities

As development spreads to the north of Benson and traffic along 301 increases, it may be practical to extend Market Street to connections with U.S. 301 on both the north and south ends of Town, making Market Street a facility equal in importance to Wall Street. At some future time when through traffic volumes along N.C. 50, 27, and 242 justify a Benson bypass, such a facility might reasonably be located on the southwest side of Town as shown on the plan. A connection between N.C. 50 and U.S. 301 on the north side of town might also be useful. Appropriate connections between these roads and the internal thoroughfare system would also be needed at that time.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

There are many actions which the Town of Benson can take to solve existing problems and to implement the development plan. Many of these actions can be and should be undertaken by the municipal government officially; however, the ultimate success of such a program will depend upon the support given by Benson's citizens in both their collective and individual actions.

Municipally sponsored improvement activities can be divided into three categories: regulatory, planning, and execution. The regulatory category consists of such activities as zoning, subdivision regulation and building and housing code enforcement. Although the planning and execution categories overlap, planning activities deal generally with studies conducted under the direction of the Planning Board such as community facilities or public improvements programs. On the other hand, joint planning and execution activities are usually the responsibility of various municipal departments and deal with specific projects such as water and sewer improvements, street improvements, etc.

Regulatory

Under the regulatory phase of activities, Benson should adopt a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and a minimum housing code. Once adopted it should enforce each of these regulations actively, as well as the building code which the Town recently adopted.

- a. A zoning ordinance would be useful in carrying out the provisions of the land use plan. It would control the use of land, the density of development, and the placement of structures on lots through provisions for land use districts, minimum lot sizes, minimum yard requirements, etc. Properly enforced, it would prevent such things as the location of a service station in a residential area, the construction of buildings too close to property lines and other buildings, etc. The ordinance would be administered by a zoning enforcement officer who would issue permits for all new uses of land or changes in uses of land which are permitted under the ordinance.
- b. The use of subdivision regulations would insure that streets and lots of future subdivisions meet certain minimum design standards and that needed improvements such as water and sewer lines and paved streets are constructed by the developer before lots are sold. These regulations would generally eliminate new streets which are too narrow or crooked, odd shaped lots, etc. Improvement requirements would ease the municipal financial burden of providing improvements and services for newly annexed areas. The regulations would also help in the reservation of adequate rights-of-way for future thoroughfares shown on the thoroughfare plan.

- c. By adopting and enforcing a minimum housing code, many of Benson's substandard dwellings can be improved or eliminated through municipal action. The enforcement of the code would require structures found unfit for human habitation be improved to a suitable level or torn down, whichever is most feasible. The code would apply to such existing defects as fire and accident hazards, dilapidation, structural defects, lack of sanitary facilities, and uncleanness. Those families forced to move through code enforcement should be given an opportunity to relocate in public housing units, when such units are available.
- d. The North Carolina Building Code which Benson recently adopted sets minimum standards which must be met in new construction. Adequate provisions must be incorporated in new structures for safety, fire prevention, ventilation, sanitary facilities, living area, etc. Properly enforced, the code prevents the construction of new substandard buildings. The code is administered by the Benson Building Inspector who reviews building plans and construction and issues building permits and certificates of occupancy for structures which meet code requirements.

Planning

Plans which the Benson Planning Board should undertake in the near future are (1) a central business district study and plan and (2) a public improvements program. The central business district study has already been discussed briefly. The public improvements study would consist of an examination of the municipal facilities and improvements which will be needed over the next 15 or 20 years, the establishing of priorities for the various projects proposed, and the suggestion of a feasible method for financing each project.

Execution

This final activity category includes several improvement projects which the municipality now has underway or is considering. Plans and projects for specific improvements which should be undertaken or continued are as follows:

- a. Public housing.
- b. Water system improvements, including the development of an additional water supply.
- c. Storm sewer improvements.

- d. Sanitary sewer system improvements, including the construction of a sewage treatment plant.
- e. Street improvements, including curb and gutter construction, paving, sidewalk construction, etc.
- f. Traffic and parking control improvements in and around the central business area.

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